

Cooking Hints

from BSA Troop 886 14 Feb 1992

Soap the bottom and side of your pots and pans before putting on the fire. This will reduce the amount of scouring you will need to do when cleaning up. Liquid soap is easier to use than bar soap.

If cooking on a wood fire, wait for the flames to burn down. The coals are where the heat comes from. Also the flames will blacken the bottom and sides of the pot making clean up more difficult.

When using a propane or gas stove you have a variety of heat settings, wide open is not the best way to cook.

Just because what you are cooking is black on the outside it does not mean that it is cooked all the way through. Check the insides before serving.

If you continually have burnt on the out side and raw on the inside food. Lower the cooking temperature so the food will cook more evenly.

Get copies of your favorite recipes at home and suggest them for camping trips.

Follow the recipe and box directions to prepare food.

Many camping books have recipes. Check them out from the library and copy the ones that sound good.

Do as much preparation as possible at home. Dice your onions, green peppers, etc. at home and store them in plastic bags. Place in the cooler before leaving.

To cut down on grease in camp food, fry meats in a fine dusting of salt in the skillet instead of fat or shortening.

Vegetables such as celery carrots, radishes, cabbage, and lettuce will keep fresh longer if wrapped in foil and several layers of brown paper bag.

A little vinegar will remove onion and fish odor from a skillet.

Scrambled eggs go further if bread crumbs and a little milk are added.

A little dab of butter in oatmeal while its cooking will make pot easier to clean.

Pancakes are less likely to stick if you add a tablespoon of melted fat to each 1.5 cups of batter.

To remove fishy odor from your hands, rub a little vinegar on them and rinse with cold water.

Bullion cubes can be substituted for meat stocks when making camp soup, stews, and gravies.

Drop a small pat of butter or one tablespoon of oil in your spaghetti water to prevent it from boiling over.

Stir pancake batter instead of beating it, don't worry about the lumps. they will disappear.

On a cold day. butter may be too hard to spread easily. Invert a heated bowl or pan over the butter dish for a few minutes. This will soften the butter but not melt it.

Save TV dinner tray to use in camp.

Sprinkle a few drops of water on sliced bacon to keep it from shriveling in the pan.

To keep cheese from molding, wrap it in cheese cloth dipped in vinegar.

A piece of apple or orange inside a covered container of brown sugar will keep it soft.

To keep salt shaker from spilling while traveling, Screw a piece of plastic wrap under the lid.

Place bread in a shoe box to keep it from being smashed.

Rice in the salt shaker will absorb moisture and keep salt from lumping.

By using lids whenever possible, you will greatly reduce the cooking time required for many foods,

Lightly grease a cast-iron fiddle before making first pancakes. Then rub a raw peeled potato between batches. This will produce golden brown flapjacks that will not stick.

To tenderize tough cuts of meat, as for stew, add a little vinegar to the water in which the meat is being boiled.

Cheese cut in small strips or narrow slices will keep well in a covered glass jar.

A little lemon juice added to the boiling water will make rice whiter and keep the grains from sticking.

At or near sea level foods cook quickly, care must be taken to prevent burning.

A can or bottle can be used as a rolling pin.

Eggs can be removed from the shell, whole, and stored in an oil jar with lid. They won't break and can still be poured out on at a time.

Form hamburgers, biscuits or cookies with a clean tin can, glass or cup.

Use fingernail polish to mark foil dinners. It won't burn off in the coals.

Do not spray non-stick coatings for pans on a hot skillet / pan or near coals or flames. The spray can ignite causing the can to explode.

Vegetables can be warmed directly in their own can, but you must first open the lid part way to vent off steam. Otherwise, the can might explode.

A small soft drink bottle can be used as a potato masher.

Adding a pinch or two of salt to water when boiling a cracked egg will prevent the whites from running out, or wrap the eggs tightly in aluminum foil.

Mix instant drinks in a screw top plastic bottle.

A pinch of flour sprinkled on fat while frying will stop the spattering.

Removing a single strip of bacon from a package is difficult. Roll the packaged tightly. The slices will come off easily.

Don't salt meats while (or before) they are broiled. Salt starts the juices running and you'll lose flavor.

Slab bacon will keep without molding for long periods if first washed in water and a small amount of soda, then dried over a smoky fire.

Biscuits, breads and corn cakes which are dried out can be freshened by placing in a brown paper bag after sprinkling lightly with water. Place the bag near the heat or in a reflector oven for a few minutes.

If vegetables or cereal scorch, plunge the pan and all into cold water for a few minutes. Much of the burned taste will be dissipated.

Test spaghetti for doneness by throwing one noodle up against a tree. If it sticks it is done. (Remove from tree after test!)

If your stew or gravy is too salty, cut pieces of raw potato and add to the mix. Remove after a few minutes. The potato will absorb the salt.

Eggs dipped in boiling water for 10 seconds will last for weeks in a camp ice chest.

To check if an egg is fresh place it in water, if it sinks it is fresh if it floats it is bad.

Store eggs with large end up, they will stay fresh longer.

Lining your cooking equipment with foil will save cleanup.

Wipe dishes and pans with a paper towel, to get the grease off before cleaning.

A pop top liquid soap container can be used to store vegetable oil. (Be sure to mark the contents of the container on the outside.)

A whisk broom or a 4 inch paint brush can be used to sweep out your tent before striking.

When traveling you can heat frozen T. V. dinners on the manifold of your car.

A substitute for maple syrup can be made by heating brown sugar in a little water.

Deepen a shallow pan with heavy duty aluminum foil.

Use plastic bags for mixing foods.

Use a clean stick as a stirring spoon.

A maple syrup substitute can be made by heating brown sugar and a little water while stirring constantly.

Enjoy scrambled eggs but don't get stuck with a hard-to-clean pan. Rinse it out with cold water first and leave a very thin layer of water at the bottom before adding egg.

To separate egg yolks from the whites, crack egg into a saucer. Turn an egg cup upside-down over the yolk. Tip off white into a basin.

Take the backache out of washing messy pans by always filling used pans with cold water straight away.

When popping corn, you'll get better results if you place corn in the freezer for a day, or as long as you care, beforehand.

Save your used eggshells in a jug of water. In a few days it will be ready to use on your indoor plants, the resultant liquid makes a good plant food.

Keep water boiled over a wood fire free of that smoky taste by throwing a clean sliver of wood into the water while your boiling it.

You say that some of the eggs you carried along acquired a crack en route? You can still boil them successfully if you first wrap them in tissue, Use string to tie the tissue closed like a purse around the egg.

If you carry along eggs, avoid cracks (and worse) by packing them in your flour or sugar.

To test the griddle temperature before cooking, let a drop of water fall onto the surface. If the water simply lies there and bubbles, the griddle is too cool. If the drop pops and jumps, it's time to cook. If it splatters and disappears, the griddle is too hot and should be raised a bit from the heat source.

The Hand Thermometer enables you to try on your campfire, recipes which specify a cooking temperature. Of course, the secret of any campfire cooking is to try and maintain steadily glowing coals, but once you have your fire in this state, you can gauge its approximate temperature by using your hand.

Hold your bare hand over the coals and count off seconds ("1 and 2 and 3..."). Your temperature guide is the number of seconds you can hold your hand over the fire.

-If you have to remove your hand between four and five seconds, you have a low heat (about 300 degrees F)

-If you have to remove your hand between three and four seconds, you have a low heat (about 350 degrees F)

-If you have to remove your hand before you can count to three seconds, you have a low heat (about 400 degrees F)

To find the temperature you want, raise or lower your hand and you will know where to set your cooking utensils. No matter what you are cooking, the results will be more consistent if you maintain an even or near-even heat. And, by using your hand thermometer, you will assure that your meal cooks at the rate which will produce the tastiest results every time.

You need even heat for griddle cooking, so use the griddle only over coals or on a stove. It won't work successfully over a campfire.

The day is hot and breezy and you want to keep your drinking water cold. Wrap the water container in a wet cloth and hang it in the open from a branch of a tree. It's good as putting it in a regular refrigerator

On that same day you can keep your dinner meat cold by wrapping it in foil and burying it in the ground.

When you've finished cooking, set your cook pot off to one side. Perhaps if you give them their own plate, the bees, wasps, flies and other pests will stay away from yours.

Avoid "burnt offerings from a Dutch oven by placing the baking pan 4 to 5 cm above the bottom of the oven.

If you're having a problem cleaning a pan, rub the area with salt.

To refreshen a pack of marshmallows place them in a brown paper bag and place in a warm oven for a few minutes.

If you burn the inside of a cook pot, shake cream of tarter into the pot, fill with water and bring to a boil. Boil for a few minutes, pour out water, and wipe clean.

Cover the ice in a picnic cooler with foil to help it last longer. Keep the water in your canteen cooler by wrapping the canteen in foil.

Use foil ring dividers for frying eggs. Put rings in the greased pan and drop eggs into each ring.

Toast sandwiches by wrapping them in a foil envelope and placing them on the embers or a hot plate for a few seconds.

Because foil-wrapped foods tend to scorch where they are in direct contact with the coals, use a double wrapping of heavy duty foil and turn food frequently during cooking.

To make a sprinkler top for vinegar or oil bottle, shape a piece of foil over the bottle opening, secure with a rubber band, and punch small holes in the foil.

Save clean-up time by lining casserole, baking and frying pan with heavy duty foil before cooking in them.

When it is time for washing up, a crumpled ball of foil makes an excellent scouring pad for pots and pans.

To keep marshmallows from burning dip them in water before holding them over the flame.

Thanks to Harry Simmons <hsimmons@vnet.IBM.COM> for providing this file.